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ABSTRACT

This book explores how young children, within their cultural imperatives, struggle to discover who they are as cultural "members" interacting with others, as "makers" trying out and creating, and as "interpreters" making meaning and making new connections. Chapters in Part 1 emphasize the significance of a philosophical approach and its implications for infants, toddlers, and adults. The chapters stress the importance of considering the cultural background of each child, and outline the philosophical journeys of infants and toddlers as they become more human. Chapters in Part 2 examine how children claim and develop their sense of membership within a familial culture where they have opportunities to exercise their functional abilities. Chapters in Part 3 emphasize imagination as crucial to the growth of the infant and toddler as maker and to adult growth. The chapters focus on the child as maker, exploring and playing with the world in a variety of creative ways. Chapters in Part 4 highlight young children's reach toward autonomy and a sense of self as worthy, courageous, and capable of intimacy. The chapters focus on the child as interpreter, discussing children's sense of personhood; curiosity; capacity to use their bodies, minds, and feelings; their use of language; and their ability to form mental images and communicate. Chapters in Part 5 highlight the role of the spontaneous and innately creative imagination of children for their own mental, psychosocial, and psychophysical health. The chapters present the voices of children of various ages "talking" in "as if" voices and consider implications for child care. Each part of the book concludes with a list of "think about" questions for self evaluation and a list of resources. A complete list of the "Think Abouts" is appended. (Contains 121 references.) (KB)

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